

A N
E S S A Y
O N
GOVERNMENT.

Written for the Author's Divertisement, at *Shapinsba*,
one of the *Orkney-Islands*, March 11. 1702. Now
Publish'd, as an Endeavour for promoting National
Love and Unity in Church and State, and healing
our Tragical Divisions.

With a Poem Suitable to the Subject.

By JOHN WILSON Minister of the Gospel.

*Psal. 133. 1. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for Brethren
to dwell together in Unity.*

*Neh. 4. 19. And I said unto the Nobles, and to the Rulers, and
to the Rest of the People, The Work is great and large, and we are
separated upon the Wall, one far from another.*

*1 Cor. 12. 28. And God hath set some in the Church, first Apostles,
secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers, after that Miracles, then gifts
of healings, helps, Governments, Diversities of Tongues.*

Printed in the Year 1706.

To my Lord Bishop of Edinburgh

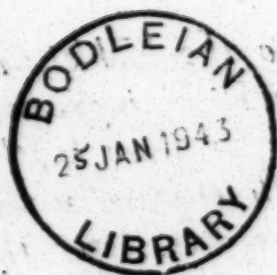
My Lord,

THe Deference I bear to your Sacred Character, and Person, one of the greatest Ornaments of our Church, and (I hope) its future Hope, after these shaking times: These Arguments, Conjoined with the Nature of the Subject, hath Engaged me to give you the trouble, to Patronize these mean thoughts, which come from a Soul, Brim-full of the Love of GOD, and of all Mankind, upon the Mountains of all Professions, and

My Lord,

One of your Presbyters,
and affectionat and
humble Servant.

J. W.



An Essay about Government.

NO Society can subsist without Government; there is something Analogal in the very Insects, as Bees, Ants, Locusts: in Beasts and Birds, these below us: Above us, in the Air, there are greater and lesser Luminaries, some by innate, others by a Vicarious Light conveying their Influences; each have their Times of Governing, some by Day, others by Night: *Jupiter* hath it's Satellites. Farther up, there is a Pleasanter Subordination, The Great and Only MONARCH sitting on the Throne of Majesty, attended by His Only Begotten SON, and His Created Elohim, Angels, Arch-Angels, Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers. Thus in the Intellectual and invisible World: In the Rational, Man, GOD's Image, hath also an image of his Sovereignty: Reason is constituted Sovereign to govern the Sensitive Appetite, frequently Rebellious. In his different Capacities, States, Conditions; Solitary, Oeconomic, Politic, Ecclesiastic; something must Rule, and the rest Obey. Is he alone, the Thoughts, as they are influenced, either by an inward Spirit, or outward Objects, Rule or are Ruled. In Families, the Husband is Supreme, the Consort Substitute, Children and Servants the Ruled Part. In Politics, the first Societies were Founded on Nature; the Parental Authority gave Law and used Cöercion, to which, by Right of Primogeniture, the Eldest Succeeded, who had also, before the Priesthood was confin'd to a particular Tribe, the Sacerdotal Power: But when *Nimrod*, the Type of Antichrist arriv'd, then began this Authority to be convoyed, sometimes by War and Violence, sometimes by Compact, sometimes by Choice, sometimes by Natural Succession, sometimes by Lot, sometimes Providence interpos'd it self, and over-rul'd all Humane Methods.

In the Church, the first Sacerdotal Authority was Parental, then the first Born; till Infinite Wisdom thought it fit to Confine it to a particular Family, among whom there was a President, a Limited Supream, who must Rule according to Law, and from whose Mouth they must seek it: Under him there are 24 heads of Family's Settled in so many orders: These heads of Family's had under them, these Descended from them. Under them were the Levites appointed for lower Ministrations, subject to them. This Beautiful Subordination the Messiah neither Reproves nor Abolisheth. Yet, one High Priest cannot Rule the Universal, as he did a National Church. There is nothing of this Ceremonial; but founded on the Nature of things, and the Necessitys of Mankind. Thus it continues, till the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls himself Arrives, and Assumes the Government, and calls to an account those Shepherds who had Fleeced; but not fed the Flock. He Substitutes twelve in Place of the twelve heads of Israel, and Seventy to succeed to their Seventy Elders. The Father had by His Supream paternal Authority, Invested Him by the Right of Primogeniture, with a Vicarious Power, He sends others with the same power committed to Him, that when they Exchanged Mortality with Immortality, the Succession might continue, and a Race of Priests be Coæval with the Race of Mankind. According to this, we find in the first (yea only) Oecumenic Council, the Apostles and Presbyters in Conjunction, who Deput the seven Deacons, in place of the Levites, for inferiour Ministrations. These, when the Gospel spreads, spread their Commission. The Apostle of the Gentiles Commissionats *Timothy* for *Ephesus*, where are to be seen Men called some time Bishops, sometime Presbyters, and the Apostle President. *Titus* is sent to *Creet* to ordain Presbyters. And that here there was no Monarchical Arbitrary Power, *Paul* mentions in one Place, *Timothy* his being ordained by Imposition of his hands, in another by the hands of the Presbytry, which shews a Conjunction. Teaching and
Ruling

Ruling are Conjoined in his Epistles; tho practised in Superiority and Subordination: For, if ever Paritie was proper, it was when they were under the immediat conduct of the Blessed Spirit, Influencing them in Doctrine, Discipline and Practice, and the greatest Cöercive Act was, Privation of its influences. In the Epistles to the Seven Churches, that the Angel was a singular Person none unprejudicat can deny, that he was only President, the Plural you once mentioned, evinces. The seven Gentine Epistles of *Ignatius*, published by the great Officer, and Vindicat sufficiently be the Bishop of *Chester*, continue this pleaiant Gospel Subordination of Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons in Conjunction: Afterwards in some Churches, (as at *Neb-Cæsarea*, *Gregorie* the Wonder-Worker,) the Bishops had none under them, till they Converted from Heathen Superstition, and then Consecrated them to the Christian Priest-hood, whom they then assumed to a Delegates Power, in Teaching and Ruling, in Conjunction still. This Subordination *Jerome* Derives from the *Mosaic* Dispensation: What the High Priest; Priests and Levites were in the *Jewish*, that are Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons in the Christian Church: and that the Superior Power is Paramount and necessarie, he again asserts: *That the safetie of the Church consists in the High Priest's Honour, to whom if there be not Granted a Power Supereminent, there shall be in the Church as many Schisms as Priests.* In the Canons of the Primitive Church, in every one of them mention is made of Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons: in the *Nicene*, *Athanasius* was only Deacon. The Council of *Carthage*, ordaines Acts done by a Bishop without consent of Presbyters to be Null. Its true, *Cyprian* Acted a while in opposition to his Presbyters; but it was because they had Acted contrary to his Authoritie. And Mr. *Rule* in his Answer to the *Cyprianic* Age, acknowledges, that in his Age, (which was the middle of the third, under the *Valerian* Persecution,) Which was long before Papal Tyrannie was known, there was a Presidencie of Dignitie and Order

Order, a Distinct Consecration, (and why that, if not to a Distinct Office?) and that during Life: This is all that is sought by any, except *Papalins*. A constant Presidence *Blondel* acknowledges, in the dayes immediatly after the Apostles, yea, in their days. True it is; when Corruptions crept into Doctrinals and Worship, they insinuat into Government too. Pride brought in Tyrannie, Riches a desire of Domination. The Bishop of *Constantinople* attempted it; but *Rome* the oldest Tyrant, since material *Babylon* was Demolished, and the Mystical Setled, claimed it as its due, and there it Setled. The seven Hills had once a Temporal Monarch over Bodies, now it hath one over Souls, and there, according as the Imperial Power fell, they rose on its ruines. Other Bishops in a lower sphere in Dependence on, and imitation of them, followed the Example. They Ruled, each according to their Capacity, with Rigour more than *Aegyptian*: till the time came, when the first stroke must be given to *Babylon*, by our excellent Reformers: Yet, the Spiritual Monarchs unwilling to Dethrone themselves, and Submitt themselves to the Yoke of a humble Jesus, continue their opposition; so that *Fatrel* and *Viret* at *Geneva*, were necessitat to set up, and *Calvin* to Nurse and continue such a Government as the necessitie of the times could procure, which is Evident from *Calvins* own words in his Book. *Of the Necessity of Reforming the Church*, If they will present us such a Hierarchie, in the which, Bishops shall so preside as that they refuse not to be Subject to Christ, we acknowledge them worthe of all kind of Anathemas; if there be any that Reverently, and with the greatest Obedience, do not observe it! More of this Nature from him and the other Excellent Reformers might be instanced. This new, yet necessary Discipline, that same necessity that framed it at *Geneva*, Transplanted it to *Scotland*; for, after they had setled in that State of necessity, a Limited Presider, one Zealous Man overturned all: Since which time, Paritie and Prelacie have been like *Jacob* and *Esau* Strugling together, the one flat

the other sharp ; yet, both their Weapons have been Edged with Steel, the Gospel hath been laid aside, and the Sword was the Decider, to the Regrate of the good, and moderate on both sides. When Prelacie prevailed, the most of them, yet not all, aimed at the old Monarchie, then each must swear their Right, or suffer : When an overturning of the State overturned them, then, what measure they mete is measured unto them, the Sword proves the Supream Argument, and this is, to this day, the sad and Lamentable Condition of this divided Church, betwixt an overtopping Monarchie in the Church, (which depressed Presbyters (and ranked them, sometimes in Person, among the *Lakies*). I speak not of all : I know from Experience, some who acted most by Consent of Presbyters, and entertain'd them with Honour) and a Flat Parity, who acted the same under disguise, they challeng'd as acted by others openly ; their Persons were not present in Secular Courts, but their influence was. One single Man did not Domineer ; but a Combination of Men did : *Dominus* was banish'd, but *Dominium* continued. Thus were Heresies broached, Schism promoted ; Scandals, to the Offence of the Christian World, increased, by Men's desultorie Levity ; swearing one year, forswearing another. Thus sadly are we brought to the brink of Ruine, while *Apostat Rome*, that laid the Foundation, intends to raise the Superstructure on our Fall.

It would then be considered, what may be the proper method, betwixt a Monarchical Prelacy and Flat Paritie, to Enstate us in Peace. The Constitution of the *Englisb* Church, the greatest Bulwark of the Reformation, tho in disuse, ordains Bishops to Act with Consent of Presbyters, and there is some Resemblance of it Retained in the two Houses of Convocation in *England*. The *Scottisb* Church, (unpreaching and State Bishops I mention not,) had nothing else but a mixture of both Goveraments.

The

The proper method, which the Author proposes with all Humility and Modestie, for healing those differences and melting us both unto one, is first to lay aside our Animosities and Contentions, our Revengful and Raging Disposition, and then hearken to Reason, when it shall be found, after the Persecution, Foretold by the Divine *Usher*, hath Refined us, that Model of Government - mentiohed by him, which is the Primitive Restored, and both Conjoined, will be our Stability after long shaking. Which, let Him, who stills the Noise of the Sea, and its Waves, and the Tumult of the People, Grant. To whom be all Glory for ever. *Amen.*

Shapinsba, 11th,

March, 1702.

The End.

A

POEM

Suitable to the Subject.

Chaos a Lump, scattered lay,
Till the Great First spake it Day,
and Order too,

And when the Frame gat Form and Shape;
The little Creatures aim'd to ape
Their Great Creator.

Created Light had got a Ray.
From Beams of Uncreated Day,
To lend again.

Each doth impart what it hath got,
And makes it's fellow share it's Lot;
Still down-ward going.

No Parity 'mong Spheres Above,
All knit by Order and by Love,
Nature and Grace.

Angels, Arch-Angels, in their Walk,
Both think, and speak, and act, and talk,
By Divine Will.

B

On

(10)
On Earth, the Insects, Creatures low
Their Leaders have, to guide the Row,
In little Cells.

Shall Man in sad Disorders ly?
Amidst these Laws both mean and hye,
Sunk in confusion?

Nature created brutal will,
Subject to intellectual skill,
Till it turn'd rebel.

Then to the Mountains of high Treason,
And the Savanna's, lusts without reason,
Poor man did ramble

His Maker seeks him back again
And makes his Parent Sovereign;
By Divine right.

But Nimrod that did lead the Van
To Antichrist of Sin the man,
Enhaunted that.

And what was done by the Swords mouth,
The Sacred hand miscall'd it truth,
And made it Divine!

By the mouths Sword established that,
Multiply'd Antichrists and sat
god's in GOD's room!

The Metal-Sword they what'd that,
Then at Antichrist's they Swat,
Still persecution!

(11)
One overtops the world wide,
Another levels all by's side,
Pride under's clock.

Thus poor Mankind betwixt the two,
Prelat and Paritie's, lost in wo;
Without remead.

After this Chaos, Lord, bring down
Order and Love, from thy bright throne,
Sweet peace its seat.

Give to thy Church the Sacred range
Bishops, and Pastors, who are strange,
To thy courts, Lord.

And let a Soul that loveth *THEE*
Adore the Sacred *ONE* in *THREE*,
Thy Courts within.

Then none shall blush that *Hymne* to own,
Glory to *FATHER* and the *SON*,
And *Holy Spirit*.

And as this was when Earth began,
So let it always still go on,
For ever more.

Amen, yea, and Amen.

Vota dabunt quæ bella negarunt.
What Wars deny, Pray'rs will supply.

THE END.

Edinb. March
20th 1706.

And as this was when...

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